1. The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Justice of the Peace) Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill) incorporates the following key elements:
* enabling two justices of the peace to constitute the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for determining minor civil disputes, excluding disputes with a value of more than $5,000 and urgent residential tenancy matters; and
* requiring one of the justices of the peace to be legally qualified.
1. Generally, the minor civil disputes jurisdiction of QCAT includes urgent and non-urgent residential tenancy disputes, dividing fences disputes, minor debts, consumer and trader disputes, claims about damage arising from motor vehicle accidents and repairs for defects in motor vehicles.
2. The amendments to the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009* contained in the Bill will enable a six month trial using justices of the peace to hear and decide these minor civil disputes. The objectives of the trial are:
* reduce the average time taken to finalise all minor civil dispute applications and improve the clearance rate across the State for all minor civil disputes applications in the trial sites (in 2011-12, the overall clearance rate for minor civil disputes in QCAT was 95%);
* reduce the cost of hearing minor civil disputes within the trial scope;
* enable QCAT adjudicators, judicial registrars (who act as QCAT adjudicators in regional areas) and magistrates (who act as QCAT members in regional areas) to deal with more complex matters;
* recognise the substantial voluntary contribution of JPs to the community and provide opportunities to improve, develop and expand their role; and
* contribute to Government commitments to improve the administration of Queensland’s justice system and frontline justice services for Queenslanders.
1. The trial will be evaluated to determine whether the program should continue.
2. Cabinet approved the introduction of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Justices of the Peace) Amendment Bill 2013 into the Legislative Assembly.
3. *Attachments*
* [Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Justice of the Peace) Amendment Bill 2013](Attachments/Bill.pdf)
* [Explanatory Notes](Attachments/ExNotes.pdf)